

West Virginia Statute

**§17A-1-1. Definitions.**

Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the following words and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them in this article:

- (a) "Vehicle" means every device in, upon or by which any person or property is or may be transported or drawn upon a highway, excepting devices moved by human power or used exclusively upon stationary rails or tracks.
- (b) "Motor vehicle" means every vehicle which is self-propelled and every vehicle which is propelled by electric power obtained from overhead trolley wires, but not operated upon rails.
- (c) "Motorcycle" means every motor vehicle, including motor-driven cycles and mopeds as defined in sections five and five-a, article one, chapter seventeen-c of this code, having a saddle for the use of the rider and designed to travel on not more than three wheels in contact with the ground, but excluding a tractor.
- (d) "School bus" means every motor vehicle owned by a public governmental agency and operated for the transportation of children to or from school or privately owned and operated for compensation for the transportation of children to or from school.
- (e) "Bus" means every motor vehicle designed to carry more than seven passengers and used to transport persons; and every motor vehicle, other than a taxicab, designed and used to transport persons for compensation.
- (f) "Truck tractor" means every motor vehicle designed and used primarily for drawing other vehicles and not so constructed as to carry a load other than a part of the weight of the vehicle and load so drawn.
- (g) "Farm tractor" means every motor vehicle designed and used primarily as a farm implement for drawing plows, mowing machines and other implements of husbandry.
- (h) "Road tractor" means every motor vehicle designed, used or maintained for drawing other vehicles and not so constructed as to carry any load thereon either independently or any part of the weight of a vehicle or load so drawn.
- (i) "Truck" means every motor vehicle designed, used or maintained primarily for the transportation of property.
- (j) "Trailer" means every vehicle with or without motive power designed for carrying persons or property and for being drawn by a motor vehicle and so constructed that no part of its weight rests upon the towing vehicle, but excluding recreational vehicles.
- (k) "Semitrailer" means every vehicle with or without motive power designed for carrying persons or property and for being drawn by a motor vehicle and so constructed that some part of its weight and that of its load rests upon or is carried by another vehicle.
- (l) "Pole trailer" means every vehicle without motive power designed to be drawn by another vehicle and attached to the towing vehicle by means of a reach, or pole, or by being boomed or otherwise secured to the towing vehicle and ordinarily used for transporting long or irregularly shaped loads such as poles, pipes or structural members capable, generally, of sustaining themselves as beams between the supporting connections.
- (m) "Specially constructed vehicles" means every vehicle of a type required to be registered hereunder not originally constructed under a distinctive name, make, model or type by a generally recognized manufacturer of vehicles and not materially altered from its original construction.
- (n) "Reconstructed vehicle" means every vehicle of a type required to be registered

hereunder materially altered from its original construction by the removal, addition or substitution of essential parts, new or used.

(o) "Essential parts" means all integral and body parts of a vehicle of a type required to be registered hereunder, the removal, alteration or substitution of which would tend to conceal the identity of the vehicle or substantially alter its appearance, model, type or mode of operation.

(p) "Foreign vehicle" means every vehicle of a type required to be registered hereunder brought into this state from another state, territory or country other than in the ordinary course of business by or through a manufacturer or dealer and not registered in this state.

(q) "Implement of husbandry" means every vehicle which is designed for or adapted to agricultural purposes and used by the owner thereof primarily in the conduct of his agricultural operations, including, but not limited to, trucks used for spraying trees and plants: *Provided*, That the vehicle may not be let for hire at any time.

(r) "Special mobile equipment" means every self-propelled vehicle not designed or used primarily for the transportation of persons or property and incidentally operated or moved over the highways, including, without limitation, road construction or maintenance machinery, ditch-digging apparatus, stone crushers, air compressors, power shovels, graders, rollers, well-drillers, wood-sawing equipment, asphalt spreaders, bituminous mixers, bucket loaders, ditchers, leveling graders, finishing machines, motor graders, road rollers, scarifiers, earth-moving carryalls, scrapers, drag lines, rock-drilling equipment and earth-moving equipment. The foregoing enumeration shall be deemed partial and may not operate to exclude other such vehicles which are within the general terms of this subdivision.

(s) "Pneumatic tire" means every tire in which compressed air is designed to support the load.

(t) "Solid tire" means every tire of rubber or other resilient material which does not depend upon compressed air for the support of the load.

(u) "Metal tire" means every tire the surface of which in contact with the highway is wholly or partly of metal or other hard, nonresilient material.

(v) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of motor vehicles of this state.

(w) "Division" means the division of motor vehicles of this state acting directly or through its duly authorized officers and agents.

(x) "Person" means every natural person, firm, copartnership, association or corporation.

(y) "Owner" means a person who holds the legal title to a vehicle, or in the event a vehicle is the subject of an agreement for the conditional sale or lease thereof with the right of purchase upon performance of the conditions stated in the agreement and with an immediate right of possession vested in the conditional vendee or lessee, or in the event a mortgagor of a vehicle is entitled to possession, then the conditional vendee or lessee or mortgagor shall be deemed the owner for the purpose of this chapter.

(z) "Nonresident" means every person who is not a resident of this state.

(aa) "Dealer" or "dealers" is a general term meaning, depending upon the context in which used, either a new motor vehicle dealer, used motor vehicle dealer, factory-built home dealer, recreational vehicle dealer, trailer dealer or motorcycle dealer, as defined in section one, article six of this chapter, or all of the dealers or a combination thereof and, in some instances, a new motor vehicle dealer or dealers in another state.

(bb) "Registered dealer" or "registered dealers" is a general term meaning, depending upon the context in which used, either a new motor vehicle dealer, used motor vehicle dealer, house trailer dealer, trailer dealer, recreational vehicle dealer or motorcycle dealer, or all of

the dealers or a combination thereof, licensed under the provisions of article six of this chapter.

(cc) "Licensed dealer" or "licensed dealers" is a general term meaning, depending upon the context in which used, either a new motor vehicle dealer, used motor vehicle dealer, house trailer dealer, trailer dealer, recreational vehicle dealer or motorcycle dealer, or all of the dealers or a combination thereof, licensed under the provisions of article six of this chapter.

(dd) "Transporter" means every person engaged in the business of delivering vehicles of a type required to be registered hereunder from a manufacturing, assembling or distributing plant to dealers or sales agents of a manufacturer.

(ee) "Manufacturer" means every person engaged in the business of constructing or assembling vehicles of a type required to be registered hereunder at a place of business in this state which is actually occupied either continuously or at regular periods by the manufacturer where his books and records are kept and a large share of his business is transacted.

(ff) "Street" or "highway" means the entire width between boundary lines of every way publicly maintained when any part thereof is open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel.

(gg) "Motorboat" means any vessel propelled by an electrical, steam, gas, diesel or other fuel propelled or driven motor, whether or not the motor is the principal source of propulsion, but may not include a vessel which has a valid marine document issued by the bureau of customs of the United States government or any federal agency successor thereto.

(hh) "Motorboat trailer" means every vehicle designed for or ordinarily used for the transportation of a motorboat.

(ii) "All-terrain vehicle" (ATV) means any motor vehicle designed for off-highway use having a seat or saddle designed to be straddled by the operator and handlebars for steering control.

(jj) "Travel trailer" means every vehicle, mounted on wheels, designed to provide temporary living quarters for recreational, camping or travel use of such size or weight as not to require special highway movement permits when towed by a motor vehicle and of gross trailer area less than four hundred square feet.

(kk) "Fold down camping trailer" means every vehicle consisting of a portable unit mounted on wheels and constructed with collapsible partial sidewalls which fold for towing by another vehicle and unfold at the camp site to provide temporary living quarters for recreational, camping or travel use.

(ll) "Motor home" means every vehicle, designed to provide temporary living quarters, built into an integral part of or permanently attached to a self-propelled motor vehicle, chassis or van including: (1) Type A motor home built on an incomplete truck chassis with the truck cab constructed by the second stage manufacturer; (2) Type B motor home consisting of a van-type vehicle which has been altered to provide temporary living quarters; and (3) Type C motor home built on an incomplete van or truck chassis with a cab constructed by the chassis manufacturer.

(mm) "Snowmobile" means a self-propelled vehicle intended for travel primarily on snow and driven by a track or tracks in contact with the snow and steered by a ski or skis in contact with the snow.

(nn) "Recreational vehicle" means a motorboat, motorboat trailer, all-terrain vehicle, travel trailer, fold down camping trailer, motor home or snowmobile.

(oo) "Mobile equipment" means every self-propelled vehicle not designed or used primarily

for the transportation of persons or property over the highway but which may infrequently or incidentally travel over the highways among job sites, equipment storage sites or repair sites, including farm equipment, implements of husbandry, well-drillers, cranes and wood-sawing equipment. (pp) "Factory-built home" includes mobile homes, house trailers and manufactured homes.

(qq) "Manufactured home" has the same meaning as the term is defined in section two, article nine, chapter twenty-one of this code which meets the federal Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. §5401, *et seq.*), effective on the fifteenth day of June, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, and the federal manufactured home construction and safety standards and regulations promulgated by the secretary of the United States department of housing and urban development.

(rr) "Mobile home" means a transportable structure that is wholly, or in substantial part, made, fabricated, formed or assembled in manufacturing facilities for installation or assembly and installation on a building site and designed for long-term residential use and built prior to enactment of the federal Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 (42 U. S. C. §5401, *et seq.*), effective on the fifteenth day of June, one thousand nine hundred seventy-six, and usually built to the voluntary industry standard of the American national standards institute (ANSI) -- A119.1 standards for mobile homes.

(ss) "House trailers" means all trailers designed and used for human occupancy on a continual nonrecreational basis, but may not include fold down camping and travel trailers, mobile homes or manufactured homes.

(tt) "Parking enforcement vehicle" means a motor vehicle which does not fit into any other classification of vehicle in this chapter, has three or four wheels and is designed for use in an incorporated municipality by a city, county, state or other governmental entity primarily for parking enforcement or other governmental purposes with an operator area with sides permanently enclosed with rigid construction and a top which may be convertible, sealed beam headlights, turn signals, brake lights, horn, at least one rear view mirror on each side and such other equipment that will enable it to pass a standard motorcycle vehicle inspection.

(uu) "Low-speed vehicle" means a four-wheeled motor vehicle whose attainable speed in one mile on a paved level surface is more than twenty miles per hour but not more than twenty-five miles per hour.

### **§17A-3-2. Every motor vehicle, etc., subject to registration and certificate of title provisions; exceptions.**

(a) Every motor vehicle, trailer, semitrailer, pole trailer and recreational vehicle when driven or moved upon a highway is subject to the registration and certificate of title provisions of this chapter except:

(1) Any vehicle driven or moved upon a highway in conformance with the provisions of this chapter relating to manufacturers, transporters, dealers, lienholders or nonresidents or under a temporary registration permit issued by the division as authorized under this chapter;

(2) Any implement of husbandry upon which is securely attached a machine for spraying fruit trees and plants of the owner or lessee or for any other implement of husbandry which is used exclusively for agricultural or horticultural purposes on lands owned or leased by the owner of the implement and which is not operated on or over any public highway of this state for any other purpose other than for the purpose of operating it across a highway or

along a highway other than an expressway as designated by the commissioner of the division of highways from one point of the owner's land to another part of the owner's land, irrespective of whether or not the tracts adjoin: *Provided*, That the distance between the points may not exceed twenty-five miles, or for the purpose of taking it or other fixtures attached to the implement, to and from a repair shop for repairs. The exemption in this subdivision from registration and license requirements also applies to any vehicle described in this subsection or to any farm trailer owned by the owner or lessee of the farm on which the trailer is used, when the trailer is used by the owner of the trailer for the purpose of moving farm produce and livestock from the farm along a public highway for a distance not to exceed twenty-five miles to a storage house or packing plant, when the use is a seasonal operation:

(A) The exemptions contained in this section also apply to farm machinery and tractors: *Provided*, That the machinery and tractors may use the highways in going from one tract of land to another tract of land regardless of whether the land is owned by the same or different persons;

(B) Any vehicle exempted under this subsection from the requirements of annual registration certificate and license plates and fees for the registration certificate and license plate may not use the highways between sunset and sunrise unless the vehicle is classified as a Class A motor vehicle with a farm-use exemption under the provisions of section one, article ten of this chapter and has a valid and current inspection sticker as required by the provisions of article sixteen, chapter seventeen-c of this code and is traveling from one tract of land to another over a distance of twenty-five miles or less;

(C) Any vehicle exempted under this section from the requirements of annual registration certificate and license plates may use the highways as provided in this section whether the exempt vehicle is self-propelled, towed by another exempt vehicle or towed by another vehicle required to be registered;

(D) Any vehicle used as an implement of husbandry exempt under this section shall have the words "farm use" affixed to both sides of the implement in ten-inch letters. Any vehicle which would be subject to registration as a Class A or B vehicle if not exempted by this section shall display a farm-use exemption certificate on the lower driver's side of the windshield:

(i) The farm-use exemption certificate shall be provided by the commissioner and shall be issued annually by the assessor of the applicant's county of residence. The assessor shall issue a farm-use exemption certificate to the applicant upon his or her determination pursuant to an examination of the property books or documentation provided by the applicant that the vehicle has been properly assessed as Class I personal property. The assessor shall charge a fee of two dollars for each certificate, which shall be retained by the assessor;

(ii) A farm-use exemption certificate shall not exempt the applicant from maintaining the security required by chapter seventeen-d of this code on any vehicle being operated on the roads or highways of this state;

(iii) No person charged with the offense of operating a vehicle without a farm-use exemption certificate, if required under this section, may be convicted of the offense if he or she produces in court, or in the office of the arresting officer, a valid farm-use exemption certificate for the vehicle in question within five days;

(3) Any vehicle which is propelled exclusively by electric power obtained from overhead trolley wires though not operated upon rails;

(4) Any vehicle of a type subject to registration which is owned by the government of the

United States;

(5) Any wrecked or disabled vehicle towed by a licensed wrecker or dealer on the public highways of this state;

(6) The following recreational vehicles are exempt from the requirements of annual registration, license plates and fees, unless otherwise specified by law, but are subject to the certificate of title provisions of this chapter regardless of highway use: Motorboats, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles; and

(7) Any special mobile equipment as defined in subsection (r), section one, article one of this chapter.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section:

(1) Mobile homes or manufactured homes are exempt from the requirements of annual registration, license plates and fees;

(2) House trailers may be registered and licensed; and

(3) Factory-built homes are subject to the certificate of title provisions of this chapter.

(c) The division shall title and register low-speed vehicles if the manufacturer's certificate of origin clearly identifies the vehicle as a low-speed vehicle. The division may not title or register homemade low-speed vehicles or retrofitted golf carts and such vehicles do not qualify as low-speed vehicles in this state. In addition to all other motor vehicle laws and regulations, except as specifically exempted below, low-speed vehicles are subject to the following restrictions and requirements:

(1) Low-speed vehicles shall only be operated on private roads and on public roads and streets within the corporate limits of a municipality where the speed limit is not more than twenty-five miles per hour;

(2) Notwithstanding any provisions in this code to the contrary, low-speed vehicles shall meet the requirements of 49 C.F.R. §571.500 (2003);

(3) In lieu of annual inspection, the owner of a low-speed vehicle shall, upon initial application for registration and each renewal thereafter, certify under penalty of false swearing, that all lights, brakes, tires and seat belts are in good working condition; and

(4) Any person operating a low-speed vehicle must hold a valid driver's license, not an instruction permit.

**§17A-3-4. Application for certificate of title; tax for privilege of certification of title; exceptions; fee on payments for leased vehicles; penalty for false swearing.**

(a) Certificates of registration of any vehicle or registration plates for the vehicle, whether original issues or duplicates, may not be issued or furnished by the division of motor vehicles or any other officer or agent charged with the duty, unless the applicant already has received, or at the same time makes application for and is granted, an official certificate of title of the vehicle in either an electronic or paper format. The application shall be upon a blank form to be furnished by the division of motor vehicles and shall contain a full description of the vehicle, which description shall contain a manufacturer's serial or identification number or other number as determined by the commissioner and any distinguishing marks, together with a statement of the applicant's title and of any liens or encumbrances upon the vehicle, the names and addresses of the holders of the liens and any other information as the division of motor vehicles may require. The application shall be signed and sworn to by the applicant. A duly certified copy of the division's electronic record of a certificate of title is admissible in any civil, criminal or administrative proceeding in this state as evidence of ownership.

(b) A tax is imposed upon the privilege of effecting the certification of title of each vehicle in the amount equal to five percent of the value of the motor vehicle at the time of the certification, to be assessed as follows:

(1) If the vehicle is new, the actual purchase price or consideration to the purchaser of the vehicle is the value of the vehicle. If the vehicle is a used or secondhand vehicle, the present market value at time of transfer or purchase is the value of the vehicle for the purposes of this section: *Provided*, That so much of the purchase price or consideration as is represented by the exchange of other vehicles on which the tax imposed by this section has been paid by the purchaser shall be deducted from the total actual price or consideration paid for the vehicle, whether the vehicle be new or secondhand. If the vehicle is acquired through gift or by any manner whatsoever, unless specifically exempted in this section, the present market value of the vehicle at the time of the gift or transfer is the value of the vehicle for the purposes of this section.

(2) No certificate of title for any vehicle may be issued to any applicant unless the applicant has paid to the division of motor vehicles the tax imposed by this section which is five percent of the true and actual value of the vehicle whether the vehicle is acquired through purchase, by gift or by any other manner whatsoever, except gifts between husband and wife or between parents and children: *Provided*, That the husband or wife, or the parents or children, previously have paid the tax on the vehicles transferred to the state of West Virginia.

(3) The division of motor vehicles may issue a certificate of registration and title to an applicant if the applicant provides sufficient proof to the division of motor vehicles that the applicant has paid the taxes and fees required by this section to a motor vehicle dealership that has gone out of business or has filed bankruptcy proceedings in the United States bankruptcy court and the taxes and fees so required to be paid by the applicant have not been sent to the division by the motor vehicle dealership or have been impounded due to the bankruptcy proceedings: *Provided*, That the applicant makes an affidavit of the same and assigns all rights to claims for money the applicant may have against the motor vehicle dealership to the division of motor vehicles.

(4) The division of motor vehicles shall issue a certificate of registration and title to an applicant without payment of the tax imposed by this section if the applicant is a corporation, partnership or limited liability company transferring the vehicle to another corporation, partnership or limited liability company when the entities involved in the transfer are members of the same controlled group and the transferring entity has previously paid the tax on the vehicle transferred. For the purposes of this section, control means ownership, directly or indirectly, of stock or equity interests possessing fifty percent or more of the total combined voting power of all classes of the stock of a corporation or equity interests of a partnership or limited liability company entitled to vote or ownership, directly or indirectly, of stock or equity interests possessing fifty percent or more of the value of the corporation, partnership or limited liability company.

(5) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to vehicles to be registered as Class H vehicles or Class M vehicles, as defined in section one, article ten of this chapter, which are used or to be used in interstate commerce. Nor does the tax imposed by this section apply to the titling of Class B vehicles registered at a gross weight of fifty-five thousand pounds or more, or to the titling of Class C semitrailers, full trailers, pole trailers and converter gear: *Provided*, That if an owner of a vehicle has previously titled the vehicle at a declared gross weight of fifty-five thousand pounds or more and the title was issued without the payment of

the tax imposed by this section, then before the owner may obtain registration for the vehicle at a gross weight less than fifty-five thousand pounds, the owner shall surrender to the commissioner the exempted registration, the exempted certificate of title and pay the tax imposed by this section based upon the current market value of the vehicle: *Provided, however,* That notwithstanding the provisions of section nine, article fifteen, chapter eleven of this code, the exemption from tax under this section for Class B vehicles in excess of fifty-five thousand pounds and Class C semitrailers, full trailers, pole trailers and converter gear does not subject the sale or purchase of the vehicles to the consumers sales tax.

(6) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to titling of vehicles leased by residents of West Virginia. A tax is imposed upon the monthly payments for the lease of any motor vehicle leased by a resident of West Virginia, which tax is equal to five percent of the amount of the monthly payment, applied to each payment, and continuing for the entire term of the initial lease period. The tax shall be remitted to the division of motor vehicles on a monthly basis by the lessor of the vehicle.

(7) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to titling of vehicles by a registered dealer of this state for resale only, nor does the tax imposed by this section apply to titling of vehicles by this state or any political subdivision thereof, or by any volunteer fire department or duly chartered rescue or ambulance squad organized and incorporated under the laws of the state of West Virginia as a nonprofit corporation for protection of life or property. The total amount of revenue collected by reason of this tax shall be paid into the state road fund and expended by the commissioner of highways for matching federal funds allocated for West Virginia. In addition to the tax, there is a charge of five dollars for each original certificate of title or duplicate certificate of title so issued: *Provided,* That this state or any political subdivision of this state or any volunteer fire department or duly chartered rescue squad is exempt from payment of the charge.

(8) The certificate is good for the life of the vehicle, so long as the vehicle is owned or held by the original holder of the certificate, and need not be renewed annually, or any other time, except as provided in this section.

(9) If, by will or direct inheritance, a person becomes the owner of a motor vehicle and the tax imposed by this section previously has been paid to the division of motor vehicles on that vehicle, he or she is not required to pay the tax.

(10) A person who has paid the tax imposed by this section is not required to pay the tax a second time for the same motor vehicle, but is required to pay a charge of five dollars for the certificate of retitle of that motor vehicle, except that the tax shall be paid by the person when the title to the vehicle has been transferred either in this or another state from the person to another person and transferred back to the person.

(11) The tax imposed by this section does not apply to any passenger vehicle offered for rent in the normal course of business by a daily passenger rental car business as licensed under the provisions of article six-d of this chapter. For purposes of this section, a daily passenger car means a Class A motor vehicle having a gross weight of eight thousand pounds or less and is registered in this state or any other state. In lieu of the tax imposed by this section, there is hereby imposed a tax of not less than one dollar nor more than one dollar and fifty cents for each day or part of the rental period. The commissioner shall propose an emergency rule in accordance with the provisions of article three, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code to establish this tax.

(12) The tax imposed by this article does not apply to the titling of any vehicle purchased by a senior citizen service organization which is exempt from the payment of income taxes

under the United States Internal Revenue Code, Title 26 U.S.C. §501(c)(3) and which is recognized to be a bonafide senior citizen service organization by the senior services bureau existing under the provisions of article five, chapter sixteen of this code.

(c) Notwithstanding any provisions of this code to the contrary, the owners of trailers, semitrailers, recreational vehicles and other vehicles not subject to the certificate of title tax prior to the enactment of this chapter are subject to the privilege tax imposed by this section: *Provided*, That the certification of title of any recreational vehicle owned by the applicant on the thirtieth day of June, one thousand nine hundred eighty-nine, is not subject to the tax imposed by this section: *Provided, however*, That mobile homes, manufactured homes, modular homes and similar nonmotive propelled vehicles, except recreational vehicles and house trailers, susceptible of being moved upon the highways but primarily designed for habitation and occupancy, rather than for transporting persons or property, or any vehicle operated on a nonprofit basis and used exclusively for the transportation of mentally retarded or physically handicapped children when the application for certificate of registration for the vehicle is accompanied by an affidavit stating that the vehicle will be operated on a nonprofit basis and used exclusively for the transportation of mentally retarded and physically handicapped children, are not subject to the tax imposed by this section, but are taxable under the provisions of articles fifteen and fifteen-a, chapter eleven of this code.

(d) Any person making any affidavit required under any provision of this section who knowingly swears falsely, or any person who counsels, advises, aids or abets another in the commission of false swearing, or any person, while acting as an agent of the division of motor vehicles, issues a vehicle registration without first collecting the fees and taxes or fails to perform any other duty required by this chapter to be performed before a vehicle registration is issued is, on the first offense, guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars or be confined in jail for a period not to exceed six months or, in the discretion of the court, both fined and confined. For a second or any subsequent conviction within five years, that person is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than five thousand dollars or be imprisoned in a state correctional facility for not less than one year nor more than five years or, in the discretion of the court, both fined and imprisoned.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, any person in the military stationed outside West Virginia or his or her dependents who possess a motor vehicle with valid registration are exempt from the provisions of this article for a period of nine months from the date the person returns to this state or the date his or her dependent returns to this state, whichever is later.

(f) No person may transfer, purchase or sell a factory-built home without a certificate of title issued by the commissioner in accordance with the provisions of this article:

(1) Any person who fails to provide a certificate of title upon the transfer, purchase or sale of a factory-built home is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall for the first offense be fined not less than one hundred dollars nor more than one thousand dollars, or be confined in jail for not more than one year or, both fined and confined. For each subsequent offense, the fine may be increased to not more than two thousand dollars, with confinement in jail not more than one year or, both fined and confined.

(2) Failure of the seller to transfer a certificate of title upon sale or transfer of the factory-built home gives rise to a cause of action, upon prosecution thereof, and allows for the recovery of damages, costs and reasonable attorney fees.

(3) This subsection does not apply to a mobile or manufactured home for which a certificate

of title has been canceled pursuant to section twelve-b of this article.

(g) Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, whenever reference is made to the application for or issuance of any title or the recordation or release of any lien, it includes the application, transmission, recordation, transfer of ownership and storage of information in an electronic format.

(h) Notwithstanding any other provision contained in this section, nothing herein shall be considered to include modular homes as defined in subsection (i), section two, article fifteen, chapter thirty-seven of this code and built to the state building code as established by legislative rules promulgated by the state fire commission pursuant to section five-b, article three, chapter twenty-nine of this code.

**§17F-1-1. Acts prohibited by operator; penalties for violations.**

(a) No all-terrain vehicle may be operated in this state:

(1) On any interstate highway except by public safety personnel responding to emergencies;

(2) On any road or highway with a center line or more than two lanes except for the purpose of crossing the road, street or highway, if:

(A) The crossing is made at an angle of approximately ninety degrees to the direction of the highway and at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing;

(B) The vehicle is brought to a complete stop before crossing the shoulder or main traveled way of the highway;

(C) The operator yields his or her right-of-way to all oncoming traffic that constitutes an immediate potential hazard; and

(D) Both the headlight and taillight are illuminated when the crossing is made if the vehicle is so equipped;

(3) With more than one passenger unless more passengers are allowed under manufacturers' recommendations;

(4) With a passenger under the age of eighteen, unless the operator has at a minimum a level two intermediate driver's license or its equivalent or is eighteen years of age or older;

(5) Unless riders under the age of eighteen are wearing size appropriate protective helmets that meet the current performance specifications established by the American national standards institute standard, z 90.1, the United States department of transportation federal motor vehicle safety standard no. 218 or Snell safety standards for protective headgear for vehicle users;

(6) Anytime from sunset to sunrise without an illuminated headlight or lights and taillights;

(7) Without a manufacturer-installed or equivalent spark arrester and a manufacturer-installed or equivalent muffler in proper working order and properly connected to the vehicle's exhaust system; or

(8) Unless operating in compliance with the provisions of section two of this article.

(b) An all-terrain vehicle may, for the sole purpose of getting from one trail, field or area of operation to another, be operated upon the shoulder of any road, street or highway referred to in subdivision (2), subsection (a) of this section, other than an interstate highway, for a distance not to exceed ten miles, if:

(1) The vehicle is operated at speeds of twenty-five miles per hour or less; and

(2) The vehicle is operated at any time from sunset to sunrise, the all-terrain vehicle must be equipped with headlights and taillights which must be illuminated.

(c) Operation of an all-terrain vehicle in accordance with subsection (b) shall not constitute operation of a motor vehicle on a road or highway of this state as contemplated by the provisions of section seven of this article.

(d) Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter to the contrary, a municipality, county or other political subdivision of the state may authorize the operation of all-terrain vehicles on certain specified roads, streets or highways which are marked with centerline pavement markings, other than interstate highways, to allow participation in parades, exhibitions and other special events, in emergencies or for specified purposes. |

**Comment [r1]:** State Law As of May 31, 2006

**§17F-1-2. Safety awareness courses.**

(a) On and after the first day of September, two thousand four, the commissioner of motor vehicles shall offer a free all-terrain vehicle rider safety awareness course, and may approve other all-terrain vehicle rider safety awareness courses, to meet the reasonably anticipated needs of the public. The commissioner shall offer free safety awareness course materials to authorized dealers of all-terrain vehicles for use by purchasers and potential purchasers free of charge.

(b) The commissioner shall issue certificates of completion to persons who satisfactorily complete the requirements of an approved course. The commissioner may authorize a dealer of all-terrain vehicles and other approved providers to issue the certificates of completion.

(c) On and after the first day of January, two thousand five, no person under the age of eighteen may operate an all-terrain vehicle without a certificate of completion of a vehicle rider awareness course as offered or approved by the commissioner.

(d) The provisions of subsection (c) of this section do not apply to the operation of an all-terrain vehicle on any private or public recreational trail or area or affiliated trail or area operated by a person or entity which has in place a safety program.

**§17F-1-3. Local government authority to regulate.**

Notwithstanding any provision of this article to the contrary:

(1) The governing body of a municipality may regulate in any manner or prohibit, by lawfully enacted ordinance, the operation of all-terrain vehicles upon any street, road or avenue within the municipal corporate limits.

(2) Homeowner associations may petition the county commission of the county in which the area regulated by the homeowner association is located for an ordinance to regulate or prohibit the operation of all-terrain vehicles upon any street, road or avenue within the area regulated by the homeowner association. County commissions are hereby authorized, upon receipt of a petition authorized by the provisions of this section, to enact an ordinance regulating or prohibiting the operation of all-terrain vehicles.

(3) The county commission of any county which has in effect and is operating under a countywide comprehensive plan may by lawfully enacted ordinance regulate or prohibit the operation of all-terrain vehicles on any road in the county, except interstate highways:

*Provided*, That any county which enacts any such ordinance shall notify the West Virginia state police and all law-enforcement agencies in the county of its action in writing, together with a copy of the ordinance.

**§17F-1-4. All-terrain vehicle rental dealers required to provide safety equipment.**

Any person or entity renting or leasing all-terrain vehicles for recreational purposes must provide protective helmets as defined by the provisions of subdivision (5), subsection (a), section one of this article, to all persons using such vehicles who are under the age of eighteen and offer protective helmets to all persons eighteen and older using the rented or leased vehicles: *Provided*, That for the provisions of this section to be applicable, the age and identity of the users of the all-terrain vehicle must be disclosed to the person or entity providing the rented or leased vehicle.

**§17F-1-5. Private property exemption.**

Except as provided by the provisions of subdivisions (3), (4) and (5), subsection (a), section one of this article, and except as provided by the provisions of section two of this article, the provisions of this article do not apply if the all-terrain vehicle is operated exclusively on lands owned or leased by the vehicle owner or on private lands of others with the owner's permission.

**§17F-1-6. Exemption for farm, commercial use; current regulations.**

(a) Except as provided by the provisions of subdivisions (4) and (5), subsection (a), section one, nothing in this article may be construed to preclude or limit the use or operation of all-terrain vehicles for lawful nonrecreational commercial purposes, including, but not limited to, farm use, oil and gas operations, timbering, surveying and public utilities access.

(b) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to supersede or contravene the provisions of any agreement between the state of West Virginia and any private or governmental entity entered into prior to the effective date of this chapter, or any lawfully promulgated legislative rule, including any emergency legislative rule, regulating the operation of all-terrain vehicles.

**§17F-1-7. Applicability of rules of operation.**

(a) Every person operating an all-terrain vehicle upon a public road or highway of this state shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by the provisions of chapter seventeen-c of this code except where inconsistent with the provisions of this article and except as to those provisions of chapter seventeen-c of this code which by their nature can have no application.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, a motor vehicle operator's license is not required of an operator of an all-terrain vehicle when he or she is operating said vehicle in conformity with the provisions of subdivision (2), subsection (a) or subsection (b), section one of this chapter except when the operator is under the age of eighteen and is transporting a passenger under the age of eighteen.

**§17F-1-8. Criminal penalties.**

(a) Except as provided in the provisions of subsection (b) of this section and in addition to any other legal remedy for violation of civil or criminal provisions of this code, any person who violates the provisions of this article or municipal or county ordinance enacted pursuant to the provisions of section three of this article or who owns or has control over an all-terrain vehicle and knowingly permits it to be used in violation of the provisions of this article is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars.

(b) Any parent, legal guardian or person who has actual responsibility for a child under eighteen years of age who knows or should have known the child is operating or is a passenger on an all-terrain vehicle without a helmet as required by the provisions of section one of this article is guilty of a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be subject to the following penalties:

- (1) For a first offense, a fine of not less than fifty dollars nor more than one hundred dollars or not more than ten hours of community service, or both;
- (2) For a second offense, a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than two hundred dollars or not more than twenty hours of community service, or both;
- (3) For a third or subsequent offense, a fine of not less than two hundred dollars nor more

than five hundred dollars or not more than one hundred hours of community service, or both.

**§17F-1-9. Definition of all-terrain vehicle.**

As used in this chapter, "all-terrain vehicle" or "ATV" shall mean any motor vehicle, fifty-two inches or less in width, having an unladen weight of eight hundred pounds or less, traveling on three or more low pressure tires with a seat designed to be straddled by the rider, designed for or capable of travel over unimproved terrain.